

A

TREATISE,

ON THE TRUE EFFECTS OF
DRINKING SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS,
WINE AND BEER,
On B O D Y and M I N D.

Absolutely necessary for every body.

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Entered at Stationer's Hall,

LONDON.

1794.



BEFORE I am able to explain to my readers what effects strong drinks produce in general, I must first shew them what effects they have when taken frequently or in large quantities. Almost all physicians agree, that spirituous liquors, wine and beer, when drunk in great quantity, oppress our spirits, blunt our senses, destroy the strength of our stomach and the balsamic quality of the blood, thicken the juices, throw the humours into an excessive motion, excite to venery, stimulate and contract the solids, which being not duly repaired, cease to perform their functions; hence a depraved appetite, consumptions, cachexies, obstructions of the viscera and dropsies, the animal spirits are low, the nerves are weakened and we consequently grow fearful, they are deprived of their most subtil fluid, and those who have contracted an invincible habit of using those drinks, are obliged to have constant recourse to the same again for assistance. They produce a superfluity of phlegm, which dispersing itself into the cells of the brain, weakens them and overburdens the animal spirits. These cells which have communication with all the parts of the body, being more and more soaked with this phlegm, and the animal spirits being consequently

quently more and more burdened, the individual grows stupid, weak, forgetful, liable to catarrhs, and other more dangerous distempers, as apoplexy, palsy, lethargy, some are subject to the gout, gravel, inflamed eyes, sore and swelled legs, jaundice, pains in the limbs, and many other diseases. In young people they bring on old age before its time and prevent the growth of youth. These drinks have not the real characteristics of good simple drink; which is to moisten, to cool and to quench thirst, but on the contrary, heat and cause thirst. By the frequent drinking of them the instruments of digestion grow weaker: I will endeavour to explain this. Strong drinks have all more or less the quality of stimulating and contracting the instruments of digestion and to excite them, as it were, to action; but the more they are assisted in this manner by art to perform their functions and are stimulated, so much the less they are exercised and forced to make efforts for themselves to digest the food; and the less any part of our machine is exercised the more its activity diminishes, and the weaker it grows itself; therefore persons that assist their instruments of digestion often with such unnatural means, cause a general relaxation of them, and are afterwards not able to digest well without these drinks, and as in the same measure as their digestion is capable of furnishing them with a great quantity of nourishment, they grow vigorous and their limbs strong, so they grow weak-

er in proportion as their digestion cannot furnish them with a sufficient quantity of nourishment, of which the reason is that the instruments of digestion which were excited by liquors to work, were not forced sufficiently to make efforts and to work themselves of their own accord, and to maintain their strength by this means. The faculties of our minds as well as the parts of our bodies grow stronger in proportion as they are exercised; a man that daily is obliged to exercise his mental faculties, will have them in vigour, and another who must work hard with his arms, will have these parts of his body strong. But the weaker all the several parts of our machine are, the more we are liable to sicknesses, when we deviate from a natural way of living as almost every body does, and the less lively and pleasantly we live and enjoy life, all punishments which nature thinks fit to inflict upon us, for the non-observance of her laws.

These are the effects of spirits, wine and beer when taken in great quantities, although wine and beer produce these effects in a less degree than spirituous liquors. Beer produces more phlegm in the stomach and in the blood, and for this reason makes us more inclined to sleep than wine, which latter heats the blood more and stimulates the solid parts more and is in this respect more hurtful than beer. Spirituous liquors possess both bad qualities at once, they produce much phlegm and stimulate the solid parts

parts much, and as they heat the blood likewise in a great degree, the individual cannot sleep so much as would be necessary for the purification of the blood, and they are for these reasons so extremely hurtful. I almost never saw a truly wise man make use of spirits, there is nothing that shortens life more.

The common opinion is that strong drinks when what most people call moderately taken, are conducive to health; men are always inclined to judge from the immediate effect a certain way of living produces, upon its wholesomeness or insalubrity, but this is quite a wrong way; after we have drunk a glass of wine, we find ourselves in better humour, and from hence we infer that a glass of wine is wholesome, because it rejoices, as the most say, the heart of man. This is really a very weak proof of it. When once a person is used to water only and entirely, he is incontestably more inwardly rejoiced by drinking it, and possesses full as much liveliness upon the whole as by any drink under the sun, although, as I am very ready to grant, it does not impart us any of that wanton and vicious joy, which strong drinks procreate, but gives us real enjoyment grounded upon reason. A great many physicians maintain that strong drinks moderately taken, are not hurtful but conducive to health, because they heat the stomach, stimulate it to action and make us lively. I wish my readers may rid themselves of this gross error. I do not deny that strong drinks promote
digestion

digestion and render us for a short time more lively, but this is a foolish liveliness, making the wisest people deviate from sound reason; and the former advantage namely the promotion of digestion is chiefly that quality in which their hurtfulness consists: for when we use ourselves to want daily, suppose, four glasses of wine, to digest our usual meal well, then as soon as we omit to drink our four glasses, we find ourselves not so well disposed.

Wine, beer and spirits producing much impurity in the blood, when taken in great quantity, there is nothing plainer but that when taken in a smaller quantity, they produce a smaller quantity of impurities in the blood; and as a great quantity of strong drinks produces a great weakness of the solid parts of our machine, so a smaller quantity must naturally produce some weakness also, though not so much. When a great quantity of strong drinks produces a certain ill effect in the body, how would it be possible that a small quantity should not produce a part of the same effect, or the same effect in a smaller degree; if those gentlemen who maintained so many times the contrary, can prove that wine or any thing else, that produces a certain taste upon our tongue, when taken in the quantity of a glass-ful, produces no taste at all when taken only in the quantity of a teaspoon-ful, then I will yield to them to be possible that neither a small quantity can hurt our constitutions at all; but as long as they are not able to prove this, so long

long the contrary will remain most probable. I think any body not much addicted to strong drinks will easily grant this, because we know that a small quantity of them produces certainly some effects agreeable and pleasant to us, and as we perceive this very plainly immediately after we have drunk them, and which pleasant effects are part of those effects which they produce when taken in larger quantities, what reason now could we have to think that they would not in proportion produce a part of those ill effects which they produce when taken in large quantities.

The chief reasons why so many persons pretend them to be quite harmless when taken *moderately*, are the following two: 1st. their ill effects do not shew themselves immediately after they have been drunk, like the pleasant effects, for this reason it is not so obvious that indispositions which shew themselves a considerable time afterwards, are the consequences of these drinks. The second reason why they believe them un-*hurtrful*, is the wish that they may be so; for nothing is more common than that people believe that true which is advantageous to them, and that untrue which they fear. If you think that small quantities of strong drinks are so advantageous to the animal body, why do you not give some to your horses and other animals in order to make them arrive to the highest pitch of health? As they never possessed this, nature should be much obliged to you if you would assist her to bring the poor animals to it.

Besides

Besides those reasons which I have alledged, there remains one still stronger, and this is that we only need make a trial: a person that is used to cold water only, and has drunk for some months nothing else, if he drinks only during two days some wine or beer as the most harmless of strong drinks, in a very moderate quantity, and attentively observes the consequences, will, when its fire is evaporated, very clearly perceive within himself a certain degree of restlessness, irresolution, stupidity and trembling in his limbs, and in general a disagreeable sensation, and will wish to possess his usual tranquility; is it therefore not certain enough that strong drinks, in a small quantity produce also ill effects in a small quantity; and these increase by long continuance to be dangerous effects; if this were not the case with those things which so many pretend to be harmless, we would not see so many thousands of people fall sick, that never go beyond what is called *moderately taken*; this already would be proof enough that many thousand things *moderately taken* produce very heavy sicknesses and very frequently death in the flower of people's age. If a man were used to eat nothing but rye or wheat with the husks, and to drink nothing but cold water, the instruments of his digestion would undoubtedly be stronger than if he were used to live upon food more nourishing and to drink wine and spirits what they call *moderately*; and as the instruments of our digestion have the closest connexion with all the parts

of our body, so there remains no doubt that our constitutions would be stronger without the use of strong drinks in moderate quantities. Besides this the words *moderately taken* express nothing at all, for a certain quantity may not affect a strong man and another may be very much hurt by it; for instance, many a one would think three glasses of gin daily taken, to be a very moderate quantity, and another by drinking them would in a short time be thrown into a violent fever; for this reason it is impossible to determine the quantity that is harmless and that which will hurt.

But when we remain faithful to nature and take that drink which she gave us, in that quantity which our instinct demands, if we do not force ourselves to drink a too great quantity of it, we never run a risk to take too much or too little of it; for nature summons us when we want it, provided we take nothing in its room, and gives us immediately an aversion from it as soon as we intend to take it too liberally.

Those whom cold water would hurt in the beginning must take it in a very small quantity, and thus undoubtedly they will gradually be able to accustom themselves to it. Our constitutions can use themselves to every thing by degrees; old or weak with more difficulty than young or strong persons.

My readers may object to me " We see so many people grow old and find themselves well and drink nothing but beer and spirits, we see therefore

therefore that the causes of sicknesses are not to be searched after in liquors." But we must consider that some people lead a life much more conducive to health in many respects than others, some, for instance are in continual exercise and in the fresh air, others have inherited from their parents a body much better able to withstand all the ill effects of unwholesome things; the instances of such persons are besides very few, and even such robust people would find themselves better without the use of these things, and would maintain their constitutions vigorous, instead that by the use of these liquors they gradually impair them, and reduce themselves at length to the state of weak people, whose ancestors have lived for many centuries in large cities, or have led sedentary and unnatural lives.

But what should still induce us more than all other reasons to abandon any drink but cold water, are the following considerations of their influence upon the mind.

Strong drinks deprave our judgment and render people more like beasts than men. An opinion which, I think no physician in the world will be able to prove false, although it be not very common, is, that the more a person takes strong drinks, the less he is master of his passions and the more violent they are; but I wish not to be misunderstood; do not imagine I would say that he who drinks a pint of beer every day, must have his passions less in his power than he who drinks nothing but water,

on the contrary it may be, that he who drinks two pots of beer and a bottle of wine a day, is better master of his passions, than he who drinks nothing but water, because it depends not quite alone upon our way of living, but whether we have often been obliged to keep our passions under restraint; as we can use ourselves to almost every thing, so we know that we can likewise accustom our mind to govern our passions. People that in their youth are not forced to withstand their passions find much more difficulty in an advanced age to do so, than others. Therefore we can by no means say that those who use strong drinks in small quantities, are less masters of their passions, than those whose only drink is water; but we can advance with certainty that one and the same person in a state of health, when he takes strong drinks is less able to keep his passions under restraint, than when he drinks nothing but water, one exception we however must make, namely, when people have eaten without a true appetite, for in this case we never are quite well disposed, and the more we have crammed our stomach, the worse we are disposed, and the less we are able to govern our passions, because some of the fluids which would ascend into the head and would make us think with liveliness and increase the strength of our mind, as which would afterwards govern the passions more easily, are withheld because the stomach wants a greater part of fluids to dilute and dissolve the food.

Besides

Besides this we must consider that we wish for the welfare of our fellow-creatures in proportion as we take less strong drinks, presupposed however that we are used to drink little of them or none at all; for if we be not, we must either by doing so sleep longer than usual, or we must cram our stomach in order to furnish ourselves with the usual quantity of strength, in both which cases we cannot be well disposed. The drinking of water produces sensations much more virtuous than the drinking of strong drinks; from this it proceeds generally that when people speak of a person's being bad-natured, they mean that he possesses such qualities as are generally, without their knowledge of it, produced by strong drinks, or by much animal food, and for this reason a person's character is in my opinion generally bad or good in proportion as he lives more or less upon strong drinks or meat.

My readers may convince themselves of this truth by making some trials, they always will find that they wish more, and make more projects, for the welfare of their fellow-beings after they have lived very soberly than after an high and unnatural way of living. A great number of people will be extremely disinclined to grant this, from their own consciousness of being addicted to a very nourishing way of living, but their speaking against this must not induce others to think these sentiments false, a person willing to be persuaded of the truth or falsehood

falsehood of any thing, must search into it himself, and must himself make some experiments and likewise attentively and for a long time observe other persons, you will generally find that the more they live upon strong drinks and meat, in the same proportion they feel little and are little concerned for the welfare of all living beings and shew little pity for them, except sickly and weak-nerved people.

If nature's intention were we should take such strong drinks, as spirits, wine or beer, she would in all probability have given them us as well out of her own hand, as she gives us that drink, of which every body perceives very plainly, it was destined for our use, and filled with such beneficial and marvellous qualities, as all other drinks fall infinitely short of it, and which we need not take any trouble to prepare for our use, nature does not want our assistance and the invention of mankind to prepare for themselves what is good; and her intention being not that whole nations shall be half sick and half in good health, but that they shall possess constitutions entirely robust and sound, has means enough to punish those who absolutely will rebel against her orders and make use of such things as she did not destine for our nutrition; she has combined ill effects with the eating or drinking of them. As by the use of them our passions grow more violent, we lose that mild disposition with which we always ought to be endowed, for this reason we are not able to treat other people

ple so as we should do, we are not so agreeable to them, we create us therefore enemies, these being offended, often think how to hurt us, instead that friends would endeavour to promote our happiness.

Thus we hurt ourselves, but not only mediately in this manner, but likewise immediately, viz. all strong drinks prepare a blood, thicker more impure and hotter than that drink which nature gave us; the consequence is, that the blood cannot circulate with so much ease, and this is the cause that people according as they use more strong drinks find themselves uneasy-minded, they have no rest within themselves, are of a turbulent disposition, all which is produced by the continual inward sensation, that they have something within their bodies, of which they wish to discharge themselves. But persons that live very soberly and particularly those who abstain from all strong drinks, find themselves quite easy-minded, and their countenances look free, and you can read in their features that they enjoy life and are good natured; on the contrary persons much addicted to strong drinks, presupposed they are not weak or sickly, look fierce and their countenance never shews any truly mild look, as soon as they discover any fault in other persons, they are inclined to shew their anger at it, forbearance and having patience is for them an impossible thing.

It

It would not be possible and even not advisable that people should disuse themselves all at once from strong drinks, gradually this must be done, or else they will bring very dangerous diseases upon them.

Many people also are obliged to work sometimes harder than usual, either with their head or body, so that they must have recourse to a little of nourishing drinks, but they absolutely ought to confine this use to cases of utmost necessity.

Strong drinks may in some cases also very well be used as physic, and in this respect we are happy to possess them. These are in a few words the effects strong drinks have on body and mind: choose now to disuse yourselves from them; or to continue with them, just as you please.

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